

Herndon's Randall Anane, a recent Honorable Mention All-Concorde District selection, goes up for a basket against South Lakes. The Hornets recently finished a successful district season at 9-3 and are now competing in the postseason district tournament.

Group Challenges Town Administration

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Residents' Input On Budget Sought

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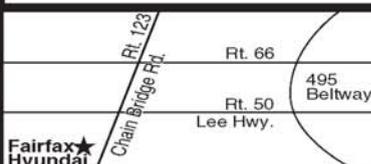
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NEWS

PHOTOS BY JULIAN LAURENT/THE CONNECTION



The Alliance for Herndon's Future, from left, Karen Stacy, Rosa Garcia, Rich Stacy, Mike O'Reilly, Nancy Myers, Carol Bruce, in the background, Lisa Merkel, holding her daughter Liza, Don Owens and Chris Griffin.



Cornell Young Jr. of Herndon

Meeting the Challenge

Once at-risk students graduate from the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Academy.

BY ROB WILE
THE CONNECTION

When Burke teenager Julie Santiago got caught skipping school last June, it seemed like the breaking point in what she described as a long line of misdeeds.

A native of Puerto Rico, Julie, 16, had already been expelled from the Catholic high school she'd enrolled in while living with her stepfather in San Juan. In January of 2008, she re-enrolled at Robinson High School after moving back in with her parents in Fairfax. But from May to June of that year, she says, she would call the school pretending to be her mother to excuse herself from classes.

"I was going clubbing in D.C., doing drugs, my weight had gone up," she said. "I was lost, I didn't know what to do with my life. I would have been 19 when I graduated — I couldn't do it."

Along with its status as the second wealthiest county in the nation, Fairfax County currently boasts one of the highest high school graduation rates in the country — 92.8 percent.

But for those Fairfax County teens who have struggled to complete high school — whether because of a learning disability, delinquent tendencies, or some other cause — any kind of reprieve from their troubles can be welcome. For Julie and several other teens in northern Virginia, their break came with a daily 5:30 a.m. wakeup and lots of push-ups.

BEGUN IN 1994 as one of 10 federally-funded pilot programs, the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Academy seeks to provide a structured environment for at-risk Virginia teens aged 16-19. Over the course of six months, the teens receive disciplinary and

SEE LESSONS, PAGE 5

Group Challenges Administration

The Alliance for Herndon's Future announces search for new town leadership.

BY JULIAN LAURENT
THE CONNECTION

On the morning of Tuesday, Feb. 3, a press conference was held at the Griffin Owens and Associates building to announce the legal formation of the Alliance for Herndon's Future LLC. Rich Stacy, who is the group's president and also a business owner in Herndon, described the alliance's vision, "We take pride in our history and our strong sense of community and are committed to fiscal responsibility, smart growth and a revitalization of a pedestrian friendly downtown. That's our purpose, that's our driving focus."

Mike O'Reilly, former Herndon mayor who was defeated by current Mayor Stephen J. DeBenedittis in the 2006 town elections, is vice president of communications for the alliance. O'Reilly denied any intention of running for mayor, but said he is "very supportive" of the group.

Also serving as an officer for the alliance is Nancy Myers, who has been an active member in HEART (Herndon Embraces All with Respect and Tolerance), a group that has supported illegal immigrants and related and contentious issues such as the funding of an official day-labor site in Herndon. In 2005, the national media focused on the town when these local issues were turned into case-in-point examples used by supporters on both sides of the il-



Rich Stacy presents Alliance's priorities.

legal immigrants debate on the national stage.

While the mayor's office did not return phone calls for this article, DeBenedittis is quoted in the Washington Post's article on Feb. 15, 2009 (Herndon Group Takes On Council), as saying of the alliance, "They're a one-issue group."

HARLON REECE, ANOTHER former mayor and town council member in Herndon, finds the notion that the alliance is a "one-issue group" to be inaccurate, saying "if you look at their Web site, there are a whole range of issues."

One of the foremost important goals of the alliance, according to Stacy, is to "inform and mobilize registered voters in Herndon" and to "elevate the importance of town issues." According to Stacy, in the

"To have such a diverse community as we do, it's certainly a worthy goal to get more of the ethnic groups involved, not only in the town government and in the boards and commissions, but even in the nonprofit organization."

— Harlon Reece, former mayor and town council member

2008 town elections, only 24 percent of registered voters in Herndon participated in the voting process; in the 2008 national elections, roughly 80 percent of the registered voters in Herndon participated.

By utilizing a grassroots approach to spreading their message, the alliance says it hopes to inform voters in Herndon from "an issues standpoint." Reece, who served on the Town Council for eight years and does not plan to seek office again, admired the group for these efforts. "What I like to hear is that they are going to try to educate people on the importance of voting and getting people involved," he said. "To have such a diverse community as we do, it's certainly a worthy goal to get more of the ethnic groups involved, not only in the town government and in the boards and commissions, but even in the nonprofit organization. It takes time, but it is a good goal to have."

Wanted in Wounding Incident

The Herndon Police Department is investigating a malicious wounding that occurred in the 1100 block Crestview Drive at about 10 p.m., Feb. 16. According to the police, a 41-year-old male victim was transported to a local hospital with gunshot wounds.

According to police, warrants have been obtained for Oscar Armando Colindres Martinez, 27, from Sterling, for malicious wounding and use of a firearm in the commission of a felony. He is described as 5 feet 7 inches, 155 pounds with brown eyes and black hair.



Martinez

Anyone with information about this case is asked to contact Detective Justin Williams at 703-435-6886 or Justin.williams@herndon-va.gov.

Bank Robbery in Hunter Woods Area

An employee of the Wachovia Bank, 2374 Hunters Square Court, was robbed Tuesday, Feb. 11, around noon. The victim, a 25-year-old Herndon woman, was working when a man walked into the bank, displayed a handgun and jumped the counter. The suspect demanded money, took an undisclosed amount of cash and fled on foot. No one was injured.

He was described as black, about 5 feet 7 inches to 5 feet 10 inches tall and 170 to 200 pounds. He wore jeans, a gray hoodie, and a black ski mask.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime Solvers by phone at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, at www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org or text "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES/274637 or call Fairfax County Police at 703-691-2131.

Preventing Hypothermia

Thousands of volunteers in Fairfax County are coming together this winter to help protect those in the community who are homeless and could be at risk of hypothermia. For the fifth consecutive year, local faith communities, businesses nonprofit organizations are partnering with Fairfax County government to prevent hypothermia deaths. This community-based effort supplements the year-round shelter and additional winter capacity offered by the county's homeless shelters.

Last winter, more than 2,300 volunteers from 57 faith communities and 13 nonprofit and business organizations partnered with the county in this effort that served 724 homeless individuals.

This winter, even more hypothermia prevention shelter sites are available, thanks to the commitment and support of the community. Shelter sites are open every night through March 15 in four regions of the county.

In addition to the extra winter capacity available at the county's year-round homeless shelters, Reston Interfaith, a local faith-based organization, is operating a hypothermia prevention shelter site using office space owned by the county government and coordinating volunteers from faith communities and businesses who provide dinner and breakfast. The shelter serves up to 25 people.

Volunteers Needed

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program is seeking volunteers to deliver free tax preparation services at no cost to working families and individuals. To register as a volunteer contact James Do at 571-749-7838, TTY 703-533-5316, or james.do@fairfaxcounty.gov.

NEWS

Residents' Input on Budget Sought

One more hearing next week; town budget to be finalized in March.

The town is seeking residents' input as officials prepare to create the budget for fiscal year 2010. A public hearing on the coming budget was held last Tuesday, Feb. 10, and another will be held this coming Tuesday.

Although he did not yet have solid projections for FY '10, Town Manager Art Anselene said, "We expect reduced revenues for next year." He said the general consensus among speakers at last week's hearing, particularly those repre-

senting civic groups, was an understanding that the town would have to cut back on some of its support and a hope that cuts would be as minimal as possible.

One organization — the Arts Council — had already planned to reduce its request from the town, while others realized cuts were likely, Anselene said.

This fiscal year's budget is slightly smaller than last year's and the town is not expecting a shortfall by the year's end, while many other localities, such as Fairfax

County, are trying to close a hole in their budgets for this year. Anselene said some revenues were running a little behind for the year, while others were slightly ahead and some job position freezes and reductions in operating budgets had been enough to keep the town on track.

The budget for the next fiscal year, which begins July 1, will be worked out over the next few weeks and will be finalized in March.

Next week's public hearing will be Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 7 p.m., in the Council Chambers, 765 Lynn St.

— MIKE DICICCO

Herndon Squads Recognized at Metro-area Competition

Two Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading squads were recognized in the Maryland Cup Beach Blast competition in Upper Marlboro, Md., on Feb. 1, 2009. More than 75 teams from the D.C.-metro area competed in the event.

"HOYC is a recreational league, and for our girls to place when competing against teams that practice year-round is very impressive," said Alicia Amico, Commissioner of the Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading program.

Coached by Amico, Adina Colander and Lori Jacobson, the junior squad walked away with fourth place. The senior squad, coached by Lindsay Hyman, Annette Kelley and Malia Phelps, placed sixth.

In individual competition, Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading members competed in the Jump and Tumble Off events. Shannon Kelley placed first and Alexa Bradley placed third in the Tumble Off. Kelley and Emily Stanley participated in the Jump Off where Kelley placed third.

The Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading program is a recreational development program for children ages six to 15. The cheerleaders support a Herndon Optimist Youth Football team and perform at various community events throughout the season.

Registration for the fall season and August summer camp will begin in June. HOYC provides a rewarding and fun experience with an emphasis on both teamwork and individual accomplishment to increase self-esteem and confidence. For more registration or volunteer information, contact HOYC at info@hoycheer.org or visit www.herndonoptimist.org/sports/cheerleading.



HOYC Junior Squad, back row, from left, Elizabeth Jones, Iyana Thomas, Gabby Reynolds, Madison Sparks; middle row, Dolly Berens, Devon Alessandrino, Nyah Hackett, Shannen Canton, Simone Parker; and front row, Agnis Alessandrino, Paige Perez, Asjah Snead, Michelle Umali, and Roisin Bergeron.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Senior Squad, front row, from left, Lauren Linton, Cynthia Lopez, Meghan Henry; middle row, Katherine Kelly, Shannon Kelley, Alexa Bradley, Kaitlyn Jones, Jasmine Henriquez, Dania Tchagbeleh; and back row, Malorie Stewart, Alex Asack, Jessica Grooms, Emily Stanley, Quiana Mosley, and Jessica Patchan. Missing Mary Hoover.

Lessons in Life and Discipline

FROM PAGE 3

educational instruction at Camp Pendleton, in Virginia Beach. While its Web site describes it as a “quasi-military residential program,” officials with the program stressed that it was not “boot camp.” The program does not accept felons, and admission is free and voluntary.

Once she realized she lacked the motivation to complete high school, Julie considered other options. Through a family friend, she learned of the academy.

She enrolled at the end of June, and has not looked back since.

Despite the abrupt change in lifestyle, Julie says she fell in love with military-style living. While it may not have been basic training, the cadets, as the teens are called, must still get through a two-week “hardcore” calisthenics regimen that includes running, push-ups, and an obstacle course. For the rest of the program, days begin at 5:30 a.m. with a morning fitness regimen, after which they attend classes and receive instruction in academic, vocational, and “life-coping” skills such as conflict-resolution and personal finance. Civics and community service are also included in the curriculum.

By the end of the program, she had gone through a transformation she likened to a butterfly’s.

“I’d never had that [structure] before, I’d never completed anything,” she said. “I learned a lot living there; it helped me get in shape, it gave me a life again. My parents were really proud of me, I got all the trust back.”

Col. Thomas Early (ret.), the program’s director, praised Julie’s achievements, which also included earning her GED after moving up five grades in math and reading. “She’s quite bright — she did well,” he said. He added that they



Cornell Young Jr. of Herndon graduates from the Commonwealth ChalleNGe Academy.

have taken her on several recruiting trips around the state to promote the program.

JULIE’S IS ONE of the major success stories of the Challenge program. She is currently attending Northern Virginia Community College, and hopes to enlist in the Navy as a nurse. Indeed, the Academy was just named the best of its kind by the National Guard. Nevertheless, there are limits to how much such programs can do: while 87 cadets out of 141 graduates completed their GED, 66 of the 207 who initially enrolled never finished the program, whether because they were physically unable or because of disciplinary infractions. The academy appears to have had the greatest success rate for cadets who already displayed natural, if repressed, ability before they entered the Academy.

Cornell Young Jr. of Herndon had been named captain of his high school basketball team and played middle linebacker and full-back for the football team before

he found himself running afoul of the law.

“I went into a store and took a whole bunch of stuff and got caught for it,” he said. “I was getting into all types of trouble. I skipped school a lot, I was coming into the house at 1 or 2 in the morning, just stuff I wasn’t supposed to do.”

Cornell’s father, Cornell Young Sr., eventually decided to take him out of school before he entered 11th grade. They chose the Academy after ruling out Job Corps, the free vocational training program, after deciding it would not be a great enough departure from the kind of academic environment in which Cornell had struggled.

“The main thing I wanted him to learn was discipline,” he said. “That was one of the main issues. When you’re down there, you’re isolated, so it’s easier to abide by the rules. At home, you’ve got a little bit more leeway, a little bit more time on your hands. It’s easier when you’re at home to go back to doing the things you were doing.”



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OPINION

No to Gatehouse II

Almost \$100 million for second school HQ building is pre-meltdown thinking.

Superintendent of Schools Jack Dale and other Fairfax County Public school administrators persist in pressing for the purchase of a new, additional building next to its current headquarters.

School Board members and Board of Supervisors members should push back against this proposal.

So far, proponents of buying the 275,000-square-foot building next door to the 210,000 square foot existing headquarters say that this is the only way they can vacate 15 properties.

Vacating those buildings will save millions of dollars they say by terminating leases and avoiding renovations; plus some are needed for new schools. These savings lead proponents to call this program "self funded."

But now that we are in a different economy, local government will have to learn to think differently about such problems.

Leaders will have to find a way to vacate 15 buildings without spending nearly \$100 million, thereby reaping the savings without going into debt for part two of a school Taj Mahal.

There are some 600 employees in Gatehouse I, and plans to move some 700 more to

Gatehouse II. That's nearly half a million square feet of top quality office space for administration. There will be no teachers or students in these buildings.

We should note that this proposal comes from good intentions. We hear that camaraderie, synergy and communication have all improved from having a critical mass of administration and services located in a single place. It's a benefit Dale, Dean Tisdadt and others rightly would like to expand.

But administrators of the Fairfax County Public School system do not need office space fit for a top-flight law firm. Space inside Gatehouse I could be reconfigured so that almost all employees had their own cubicles — not offices. A few small conference rooms could make room for private conversations and phone calls as needed.

Many employees already telecommute, or could, on some days, and others spend most of their time in a variety of schools. These employees should share space; a cart for their files and a laptop should enable them to use modular space, greatly increasing the number of workers who could be accommodated in-

side the existing building.

FCPS also purchased three acres next to Gatehouse I where the original proposal was to build Gatehouse II. Now the proposal is to purchase an adjacent existing building.

Instead, the schools should install modulars (trailers) on the three acres to accommodate any employees who need to vacate the 15 buildings but don't fit inside a reconfigured Gatehouse I.

There are also problems with the process being used in this decision. There have been no public hearings on the subject. And the Board of Supervisors is scheduled to consider this next week. When we modernize or build schools here, voters get to weigh in by means of a referendum, and Fairfax voters have overwhelmingly supported school projects. Why don't voters have a say on this, which has been in the works for years?

This way, the schools can save \$100 million twice.

Don't just take our word for it, read the school system's arguments in favor of buying Gatehouse II at <http://www.fcps.edu/news/office.htm>.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

EDITORIAL

Closer to Smoke-Free State

BY TOM RUST
STATE DELEGATE (R-86)



RICHMOND REPORT

Last week, the Speaker of the House announced that a compromise had been struck with the Democrats in the House, the Senate and the governor to prohibit smoking in restaurants with certain key exceptions. This week the smoking ban bills, HB 1703 and SB 1105, both passed the House of Delegates.

I am very pleased that the Speaker of the House reached out to the governor to facilitate this compromise. Many constituents have contacted me over the years about these bills and I have always supported efforts that move Virginia to being a more smoke-free state.

This session I patroned 11 bills, which passed the House of Delegates.

One of my first bills to pass the body was one that helped William and Mary, Virginia Tech and VCU better manage their endowment funds. We passed similar legislation for the University of Virginia a few years ago and it has benefited them significantly.

The bill which I personally am

most excited about, which passed the House of Delegates, is a bill which significantly changes the policy of how Virginia plans major transportation projects. HB 2019 requires the Commonwealth Transportation Board to establish "transportation corridors of statewide significance" in the State-wide Transportation Plan. This bill could have a very positive effect on the future of our state's transportation and I am pleased that it reported from the transportation committee unanimously.

The House also passed another of my bills, HB 2021, which called for the impoundment of a motor vehicle for 30 days when the driver of the vehicle did not have a li-

cense. There were about 60,000 convictions of persons without operator's license in Virginia last year. It is a significant problem with accompanying safety issues. Persons who have never had an operator's license are 4.9 times more likely to be in a fatal accident than those who have a license. Once the individual obtains a license or waits 30 days, he or she could get the vehicle back. Those under 18 or whose valid license has been expired for less than one year are exempt.

Some may remember that last year I sponsored legislation that addressed the issue of funding for public-school construction. It passed the House, but was held up in the Senate. Since last year, I have worked on the legislation and have reintroduced it this year and it has again passed in the House. House Bill 2018 sets up a revolving fund which accepts both private and public funds for elementary, secondary, high and vocational educational buildings. The School Construction revolving fund will issue municipal bonds which would go the various localities. If the federal stimulus package has educational funds in it,

this revolving fund would be a perfect vehicle to take advantage of the funds.

One other bill I patroned which passed the House is the Vacant Properties Bill which received praise from various home owners associations. House Bill 2150 addresses the registration of vacant residential properties. The bill permits localities to require mortgage lenders to provide the locality with the name and contact information of a local agent who would be responsible for the property once it was vacated.

This bill is a step forward in an effort to make sure the vacant properties in our neighborhoods are accounted for, and if necessary, maintained so that they are not a detriment to our quality of life. In these hard economic times, unfortunately, houses are still being vacated. If localities can hold someone accountable, there is a much greater likelihood to prevent blight in our communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me in Richmond should there be an issue of concern to you. I can be reached by e-mail at DelTRust@house.state.va.us or by phone at 804-698-1086.

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LETTERS

Dale is Wrong On Gatehouse II

To the Editor:

Just when you thought that you have heard enough about bailouts, wait until you hear about this one On Feb. 12, 2009, Superintendent Jack Dale sent his marketing message to the Parent Advisory Council (PTA) to drum up support for spending \$94.5 million dollars on his pet project of acquiring another administration building for his staff. The public is expected to believe that purchasing this building will generate cost savings of \$62 million — up \$40 million from just a few months ago. Wow — imagine that — \$40 million in savings appeared out of no where. With that kind of magic, we could solve our economic crisis instantly.

Dale's message to the PTA, "No money will be taken away from schools or students, the project will be fully self-funded through savings and efficiencies and no payments will need to be made until fiscal year 2013."

No payments until fiscal year 2013 — yes, and the law of economics says that if you are borrowing money and not repaying the principal, guess what? The debt balance goes up. This is part of the reason for the mortgage mess. Putting off payment for three years is not a savings nor is it efficient.

Dale is wrong. Spending \$94.5 million of scarce funds to buy and renovate another administration building does take money away from students, teachers and our schools. If South County High School can be paid for by EDA bonds, so can other schools renovations.

So here are three novel ideas for Dale, School Board members and the Board of Supervisors who will go behind closed doors to discuss and vote on this proposal on Feb. 23. First, the \$94.5 million generated by selling EDA bond should be used to renovate those schools that have been sitting in the queue for decades. The parents of West Springfield High School should be appalled that this is not the plan.

Second, under the leadership of the new board chair, Sharon Bulova, the discussion between the School Board and supervisors should come out from behind closed doors. There should be public vetting with a public hearing for this proposal.

And finally, return the administrators who were once teachers back into the classroom. Then you won't need another building and our children would be getting a better education. Our kids and teachers deserve better — espe-

cially the ones stuffed into trailers and in schools that are falling apart.

Kim Farrell
Vienna

An Open Letter To Chairman Bulova

Dear Chairman Bulova:

I thought this cat was dead. Why do we have to continually consider, especially in secret this very bad idea called Gatehouse II?

Citizens are becoming fed up. The big elephant in the room over the last several months has been exotic Wall Street conglomerates who turned out to be not so exotic and not so good at management decisions. Among those bad decisions were mortgage schemes in which no early-year interest payments were required of some subprime borrowers. Subsequently, as we now know, these not so exotic organizations have required a bailout. Then as the "bail-out money" was distributed, we discovered some of that bailout money was being used to award management ludicrous bonuses.

Not to be outdone by Wall Street, it now it appears Fairfax County is attempting to bailout some real estate speculators who made a bad business decision in late 2006. You may remember, mid-year 2006 was at the height of the real estate market and exactly the wrong time to make a buy decision, especially of the building at 8111 Gate House Road and unbelievably for \$43,545,000. In an effort to put some lipstick on this bovine, Fairfax County is calling it Gatehouse II and trying to bond out and then obligate somewhere around \$100 million capitol expense to acquire and upgrade this building. Despite the School Board's assertion to the contrary, this is the same money that could be used to accomplish critically needed refurbishment of existing school facilities.

To make matters worse, for some reason, the first three years of interest is not being paid. Apparently it is being added back into the capitalization of the mortgage so even more interest will be due in the future. Does this interest delayed strategy ring a bell? The other costs, to include future interest payments, are additional tens of millions of dollars not being shown nor discussed.

To add insult to injury, I have just learned Fairfax County Public Schools has an organization called the "Department of Statistical Responsibility." What exactly is this

all about? Sounds like a "spin" group to me. What this school administration needs is a Department of Fiscal Responsibility, not a department that appears to be devoted to manipulating numbers to advertise how great our schools are."

Bruce Bennett
Vienna

More Arms, Less Crime

To the Editor:

Your Opinion in the Feb. 11, 2009 Connection ["Gun Show Loop Hole Stays Open"] was very misleading. First of all, there was no "affront" to the Virginia Tech victims' families. The criminal that committed the murders did not purchase any of his arms from gun shows. You also failed to mention the fact that criminals do not buy guns at gun shows. In fact, it was liberal privacy policies that prevented the shooter from being registered into the instant check system. You also failed to mention this situation was corrected in January 2008 by the passage of HR 2640, which was signed into law by the president. This is evidenced by your inability to identify any violent crime committed with a gun show purchase. This is because criminals buy illegal guns on the black market. Gun shows sell mostly collectible items, which are generally rare, expensive and not of much utility to criminals. You failed to discuss why the law failed to pass. It is because the law would do nothing. For example, where does the gun show begin and end? If an unscrupulous seller steps outside the building, is the sale no longer at the gun show. What about if the sale is made after the show ends? The State of Virginia is one of the most heavily armed in the union and has one of the lowest crime rates. I challenge this paper to find an area of the country with gun bans that has low-crime rates.

Sam Lowenstein
Vienna

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
The Connection
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By fax: 703-917-0991.
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Living Without Coverage

An often overlooked group, Northern Virginia 20-somethings struggle to get health insurance.

BY ROB WILE
THE CONNECTION

For most healthy 20-somethings like Alexandria resident Anthony Sliwak, the prospect of facing a serious medical emergency might seem remote. For the past four months, Sliwak has been waiting tables at the Evening Star Cafe in Delray. Short of burning himself while helping prepare the rosemary-braised lamb shank, working as a waiter poses little danger to his short-term health.

It may not seem too surprising, then, that Sliwak does not have health insurance. "I'm just assuming [it's too expensive]," he said. "There's been no real reason for me to go to the hospital, but I know that sooner or later, it's only a matter of time before I break my leg — it's probably gonna happen tomorrow."

Sliwak is far from alone amongst individuals in their early 20s lacking health insurance. According to the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), 35 percent of men and 28.8 percent of women aged 21-24 do not have health insurance — the greatest percentage for any age group in the country. The national average is about 15 percent.

While President Obama has made expanding health insurance coverage one of the cornerstones of his administration, he is likely to focus on the growing ranks of individuals who've temporarily lost health coverage as a result of losing their jobs. In the pending economic stimulus bill, \$87 billion have been allocated to extend Medicaid benefits to those who have become unemployed involuntarily.

The number of individuals in their early 20s without health insurance, however, has always been proportionally much higher, according to Paul Fronstin, senior research associate at the EBRI.

There are obvious reasons for this, he said.

"For them it's a rational decision — that [if] they're not sick, why get the insurance?" he said. "If you think about their priorities — you just got a job, a new apartment, you have to pay for a car, student



PHOTO BY ROB WILE/THE CONNECTION

"They told me my options but said I'd have to pay, and I couldn't afford it."

Antwon Chemrinow, 23, of Herndon

Anthony Sliwak, a waiter at the Evening Star Cafe in Del Ray, said that he knows he needs insurance, but is unable to afford it.

loans — all of a sudden you're in the real world, and health insurance not high priority, which isn't necessarily irrational, but there are potential consequences."

MOST HEALTH INSURANCE plans allow parents to claim their children as dependents until they are 23 years old if they have been or are currently enrolled in college. If they do not attend college, they will no longer be covered after they turn 19.

For a 23-year-old male that does not use tobacco living here, the two cheapest plans with Kaiser Permanente Insurance run \$75 a month with a \$1750 deductible, or \$138 a month with a \$750 deductible. Anthem-Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the largest health insurer in Virginia, offers a similar plan. There are also short-term versions of these policies that can range anywhere from 30 days to six months.

As reasonable as that might seem to some, it's still out of range for Sliwak. "I haven't looked into it, but I'm just assuming it's gonna be too expensive," he said. "I can barely pay rent. If I ever get sick, I'll pretty much have to self-medicate myself by going to CVS." he said.

Antwon Chemrinow, 23 of Herndon, a student at Northern Virginia Community College, works part-time at a Giant supermarket. He said that after he got out of the Navy last year, he assumed

he wouldn't be able to afford any kind of health insurance, and he has now been without it for two months. "They told me my options but said I'd have to pay, and I couldn't afford it," he said. "It is important to me to have health insurance, and if I had the money I'd get it. I haven't really looked at my options, but I figure I don't have the money."

The military has its own policies for extending its Tricare coverage to qualified retirees and veterans. All service members and dependents must apply through the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, which determines on a case-by-case basis whether they are eligible to receive a six-month extension of Tricare benefits. Once those six months are up, they can still receive up to 36 months of benefits under the Continued Benefits Health Care Program, which is administered by the military division of Humana Insurance.

For this, however, they must pay premiums.

SOME NORTHERN VIRGINIA young adults do fit Fronstin's portrayal of them as not only unable, but also unwilling to pay for insurance. Nancy Chance, like Chemrinow a student at Northern Virginia Community College in her early twenties, is also uninsured. She said she has done research, but decided that even if she could afford to pay for health insurance, it wouldn't be worth it.

"By the time you pay all the copays and deductibles, it's the equivalent of a full visit to the doctor," the Springfield resident said.

"Plus a lot of the part-time insurance policies don't offer benefits like dental. I'm not concerned — as long as you're not doing stuff you're not supposed to do, you're going to be all right."

Laura Secker, a 28-year-old full-time waitress and bartender at the Vermilion restaurant in Alexandria, said that she went almost a year and half without insurance when she got out of college. Like most waiters and bartenders who can afford it, she says she's now covered through a private insurance plan. "It just got to a point where I decided I needed to be responsible with my life," she said.

Finally, there's a demographic that is both willing and, in some cases, able, to get insurance, but have no way of doing so because they are not citizens. Angie Erdenebat, a 20-year-old Mongolian native living in Arlington on a student visa, says she had to pay thousands of dollars in dental bills after she fell while running because she does not have a Social Security number, which has prevented her from getting any kind of coverage. "It's hard to live in America without documents," she said.

The issue of insuring American young adults in their young 20s has not been on anyone's radar, Fronstin said. The current proposal by Congress to propose a 65 percent subsidy to help people purchase COBRA insurance would cover everyone, including people in their 20s, he said.

Massachusetts, the only state in the Union to mandate that all residents have health insurance, has low- or no-cost policies specifically designed for individuals aged 18 through 26.

No similar plan is in the works for Virginia, according to Craig Mikva-Kaiser, communications director for the Virginia Department of Medical Assistance.

To begin to address this specific problem, Fronstin said, there needs to be more parental education. "Parents should be telling them that it's so important," he said. "They get it, but they're still making this choice based on the options they face."

A more extensive solution — short of universal coverage — would be to take employers off the hook for providing health insurance so that young adults — and everyone else — do not have to depend almost exclusively on a job for health benefits.

This idea has been on the floor of Congress at least since February 2001, but has gone nowhere.

CALENDAR

Send announcements to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday for the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit www.connectionnewspapers.com.

THURSDAY/FEB. 19

Canines in Reston. 7-8 p.m., Reston Association, 1930 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. Learn about the coyote and how they are changing fox behavior. \$3/RA members; \$5/non-residents. Reservations required by Feb. 17; call 703-435-6530.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

Norman Wright and the Travelers are performing their bluegrass music at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, 7:30 p.m. Tickets: \$12; call 703-435-8377.

Reston Chorale. 6 and 8 p.m., Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Reston Chorale will perform two shows. Visit www.restonchorale.org.

SUNDAY/FEB. 22

Jazz Meets Rock. 2-3 p.m., Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 W. Ox Road, Herndon. Explore the evolution of style during the years when greats like John Coltrane and Grover Washington were kings. Free. Call 703-437-9101.

Capitol Steps. 7 p.m., Herndon High School Auditorium. The award winning political satire group Capitol

THEATER

"The Full Monty," Reston Community Players at CenterStage of the Reston Community Center, 8 p.m., Friday, **March 6**; 8 p.m. Saturday, **March 7**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 13**; 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 14** (sign interpretation); 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **March 15**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 20**, and 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 21**; 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **March 22**; 8 p.m., Friday, **March 27**, and 8 p.m., Saturday, **March 28**. See www.restonplayers.org.

"Falsettos," Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **March 13-April 4**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"Something Different 2009," Theater for Young Audiences, Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **March 21-April 5**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

VOLUNTEERING

The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program** is seeking volunteers to deliver free tax preparation services at no cost to working families and individuals. Volunteers contribute a few hours weekly during tax season to help prepare tax re-

BULLETIN BOARD

WEDNESDAY/FEB. 18

MOMS Club. 10-11:30 a.m., Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. The MOMS Club of Herndon will host its monthly meeting. All Herndon and Oak Hill stay at home mothers are welcome.

SATURDAY/FEB. 21

University Women. 10 a.m., ArtSpace of Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. The American Association of University Women of Reston and Herndon will meet. The speaker for the meeting will be Elizabeth

Steps will perform to benefit the Class of 2009. Tickets: \$35/person; visit www.fcps.edu/HerndonHS/.

MONDAY/FEB. 23

Ansel Adams: A Documentary. 7 p.m., Lake Anne Community Center, 1609 N. Washington Plaza, Reston. Join the Great Falls Group of the Sierra Club for this Emmy Award-winning film featuring scenery from the American West and photographer Ansel Adams. Contact Linda Burchfiel at 703-506-4310 or larva@attglobal.net

FRIDAY/FEB. 27

Organic Gardening. 7-8:30 p.m., Reston Association, 1930 Isaac Newton Square, Reston. Join a master gardener for some information on organic gardening. \$5/RA members; \$8/non-residents. Reservations required by Feb. 24; call 703-435-6530.

Audition. 7:30 p.m., Lindsay C. Petersen Hall, 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The Reston Community Players are holding auditions for their production of "Laughing Stock." There are 9 male roles and 5 female roles.

SATURDAY/FEB. 28

Audition. 2 p.m., Lindsay C. Petersen Hall, 266 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. The Reston Community Players are holding auditions for their production of "Laughing Stock." There are 9 male roles and 5 female roles.

"Laughing Stock," Reston Community Players at CenterStage of the Reston Community Center, 8 p.m., Friday, **May 1**; 8 p.m. Saturday, **May 2**; 8 p.m., Friday, **May 8**; 8 p.m., Saturday, **May 9** (sign interpretation); 2:30 p.m., Sunday, **May 10**; 8 p.m., Friday, **May 15**, and 8 p.m., Saturday, **May 16**. See www.restonplayers.org.

"The History Boys," Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **June 5-27**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"Fairytales in Training," Theater for Young Audiences, Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **June 13-28**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

"Amour," Elden Street Players at the Industrial Strength Theatre, **July 31-Aug. 22**. See eldenstreetplayers.org.

turns, or serve as greeters, screeners, site coordinators and interpreters. To register as a volunteer contact James Do at 571-749-7838, TTY 703-533-5316, or james.do@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Vandenburg of Reston, the AAUW Mid-Atlantic representative to the National Science Foundation's "National Girls Collaborative Project." Vandenburg will discuss the project and findings of AAUW's national research report "Where the Girls Are: The Facts About Gender Equity in Education." Call Carol Van Evera at 703-759-5543.

MONDAY/FEB. 23

NARFE Meeting. 11:30 a.m., Amphora's Diner Deluxe, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. Call 703-435-3523 to make your choice of lunch entrée.

www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Artists Jo Fleming and Bill Moore stand before her painting "Tangle," acrylic on canvas and his bronze sculpture "Scarab."

ArtspaceHerndon, a new community art gallery and classroom studio located in the heart of Herndon, is presenting Habitat, an exhibition of contemporary landscape paintings and sculpture addressing the subject of adaptation of the environment and its living inhabitants.

Jo Fleming of Great Falls presents paintings, which share her observations of "modified" wild places and depict flora and fauna utilizing available resources in the landscape. Some paintings recognize gestures of man in the built environment to interact with the natural world.

Colorfully patinated bronze sculptures by Bill Moore of Silver Spring, Md., present, at magnified scale, the physical adaptations of

armored beetles and ancient fossil fish, which were predators of the seas millions of years ago.

Exhibition dates are Feb. 10-March 9; a reception, which is open to the public will be held Feb. 21, 5-7 p.m. Gallery hours are Tuesdays-Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Sundays, 1-3 p.m.

For more information, visit www.artspaceherndon.com, www.jofleming.com or www.moore sculpture.com.

An exhibition of art by students from Herndon High School entitled "Emerging Visions: ROOTS" will be on display **Feb. 26-April 14** at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 12001 Market St., Suite 103, Reston.



CONTRIBUTED

Cloudscape #1 by Kurt Schwarz (left) and Don Giovanni by Maggie Siner and other works by the two artists will be on display at Gallery 222, 222 S. King St., Leesburg through March 31.

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MASON PATRIOTS

SCHOOLS

New York City based **Improv 4 Kids** will perform Thursday, **Feb. 19**, 7 p.m. at Fox Mill Elementary School, 2601 Viking Drive, Herndon. The cast takes audience suggestions and participation to inspire original music, theater and comedy. Every show is unique. Tickets: \$10. Visit www.improv4kids.com.

Family Math Night will take place at Hutchison Elementary, 13209 Porcher Ave., Herndon Thursday, **Feb. 19**, 6:30 p.m. The participants will play "make-and-take" math games that encourage skills development and application of learned math concepts. Contact principal Judy Baldwin at 703-925-8300 or judy.baldwin@fcps.edu.

The Herndon High School Band Parents Association presents the **2009 Bingo Blast** Friday, **Feb. 20**, 6-9 p.m. in the Herndon High School cafeteria, 700 Bennett St., Herndon. Prizes and food on hand. All proceeds benefit the Herndon High School Band.

Learn about post-secondary education options at a workshop entitled **"What Am I Going To Do After High School?"** Wednesday, **Feb. 25**, 7-8:30 p.m. at South Lakes High School, 11400 South Lakes Drive, Reston. Free. E-mail Natashi.Anthony@fcps.edu or call 571-423-4150 to register.

The **Herndon High School** and

Herndon Middle School Orchestras along with musicians and directors from the Area Orchestras (Elementary level) will perform contemporary and classical selections in a Pre-Festival Concert Thursday, **Feb. 26** in the Herndon High School Auditorium at 7 p.m. Free. Visit www.herndonorch.org.

Inova Hospital is sponsoring the **"Reality Check Teen Driving Safety Program"** March 14, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Herndon High School. Reality Check is a joint student/parent program aimed at giving newly licensed and soon to be licensed drivers a real-life look at the consequences of unsafe driving behavior and decision-making.

For more information or to register, call 703-776-3259 or e-mail ashley.elzein@inova.org.

Herndon Elementary School, 620 Dranesville Road, is holding a Career Fair Thursday, **April 2**, with session one from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. and session two from 1-3 p.m. Call 703-326-3117, fax to 703-326-3197 or e-mail Tiffany.Bryant@fcps.edu or Donna.Neil@fcps.edu to register.

During February and March, **Glory Days** will donate a percentage of your purchase to the Herndon High School Class of 2011. Submit an itemized receipt (not credit card copy) to

Sherry Amado or Keysha Moon. Ask your neighbors, friends, relatives to save and donate their receipts. Receipts can either be mailed to the high school c/o Ms. Amado or Ms. Moon or placed in the box located in the main office.

The Herndon High School Dance Team made it to the semi-final round at the National Dance Team Championship in Orlando, Florida in the small varsity pom division.

The following Herndon High School Students have been named 2009 Scholastic Art Award Winners: **Nick Fagan, Aaron Kassraie, and Annette Lee.**

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 1989 Logan Manor Dr.....\$694,500.....Sun 1-4.....Eileen Dubose.....National Realty.....703-403-6030

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 20121 Black Diamond Pl.....\$1,389,990.....Sun 1-4.....William Garrett.....MLS Connect.....301-825-9255
 21279 Irongate Way.....\$435,000.....Sun 1-4.....Kuljeet Chabbawal.....Weichert.....703-314-3632
 43278 Rush Run Ter.....\$309,000.....Sun 12-2:30.....Amy Sikora.....Weichert.....540-338-5020

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 21036 Great Woods Dr.....\$650,000.....Sat & Sun 1-5.....Jocelyn Santiago.....Long & Foster.....703-244-1344
 249 Mindy Ct., SE.....\$500,000.....Sat 1-4.....Julie Hertel.....Long & Foster.....571-243-5952
 19213 Sweig Ter.....\$395,000.....Sun 1-4.....Stephen Adamson.....Weichert.....703-726-3909

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36361 Lowell Reed Ln.....\$575,500.....Sun 1-4.....Lindsay Hope.....Prudential Carruthers.....540-454-1160
 14079 Mountain Rd.....\$659,000.....Sun 1-4.....Jacqueline Hagenston.....Long & Foster.....540-454-1452
 410 Nursery Ave., S.....\$379,755.....Sun 12-3.....Karen Overheu.....RE/MAX.....703-589-3584
 37757 Piggott House Pl.....\$750,000.....Sat 12-3.....Suzanne Gaibler.....Weichert.....703-264-0000

South Riding

25844 Turlough Ter.....\$375,500.....Sat 1-4.....Ben Turpin.....RE/MAX.....703-652-5760

Sterling

21083 Rotunda Ter.....\$385,000.....Sun 1-4.....Stephen Adamson.....Weichert.....???-???-????

To add your Realtor represented Open House to these weekly listings, please call Lauri Swift or Winslow Wacker
703-821-5050 or E-Mail the info to Lauri@connectionnewspapers.com
All listings due by Monday at 3 pm.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday.

Reston Presbyterian Church, 10310 Sunset Hills Road, Reston, is hosting its Winter 2009 Coffee House Saturday, at 6:30 p.m. The Winter Coffee House is a casual evening **Feb. 21** which features snacks and coffee along with live music. Free. Visit www.rpccconnected.org.

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 432 Van Buren St., Herndon, is offering a special **Taizé service** Sunday, **March 1**, 5 p.m. Taizé, a Christian monastic community from the Burgundy region of France, is widely recognized for developing a style of worship which consists of brief prayers and meditative songs. Call 703-437-3790.

Congregation Beth Emeth Hazak Chapter, 12523 Lawyers Road, Herndon, hosts prominent speakers and entertainers on the **third Tuesday of each month**, at 1 p.m. Free light refreshments are served. Call

703-860-4515, Ext. 127. The guest list is as follows:

March 17: Dr. Louis Blumen, Jewish Medieval Medicine

April 21: Steven Gross, The Holocaust in Hungary

May 19: Speaker from Embassy of Israel

June 16: Year-end Luncheon

St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 432 Van Buren Street, Herndon, is hosting their annual "Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper" Tuesday, **Feb. 24**, 6-8 p.m. Enjoy pancakes, French toast sticks, ham, and other treats. \$12/family; \$6/adult, Call 703-437-3790.

Citizenship classes meet Thursdays, **through March 26** at St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive, Reston. The goal is to prepare qualified adult students to pass the USCIS interview and exam for naturalization to become U.S. citizens. Book fee of \$15.00. Call 703-437-6530.

The Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Ave., Reston, welcomes the Co-op of Israeli Artists for the Israeli Arts and Crafts Fair

Saturday, **Feb. 28**, 6-10 p.m. and Sunday, March 1, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. The Co-op represents artists from the artists' colony of Safed and elsewhere in Israel. Payment will be accepted by cash or check only. Visit www.nvhcreston.org or call 703-437-7733.

Cedar Run Community Church, 13560 McLearen Road, Herndon, is hosting a live simulcast event entitled "Focus On Marriage - Seeing Your Marriage Through The Eyes Of God" Saturday, **Feb. 28**, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Visit www.ccn.tv/focusonmarriage.

Washington Plaza Baptist Church, 1615 Washington Plaza, Reston, is holding the **Installation Service** of their new pastor, Elizabeth Hagan, Sunday, **March 1** at 4 p.m. Program participants include area pastors, friends and mentors of Elizabeth as well as members of Washington Plaza and contributions from their fabulous choir. All ministers attending are asked to wear clerical robes to be a part of the processional at the beginning of the service. A reception will follow the service in the church's Plaza Room. Visit www.washingtonplazachurch.com.

COMMUNITY NOTES

Send information to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-917-6437. Deadline is Thursday. Photos/artwork welcome.

The Herndon Police Department is now seeking children ages 14-17 to attend the Youth Police Academy on Thursday evenings, March 5-May 7, 6-8 p.m. at the Herndon Police Department, 397 Herndon Parkway. The Youth Police Academy is a 10-week program that offers area teens a better understanding of the Police Department and a greater awareness of the daily challenges faced by police officers. Fee: \$10. Applicants must provide their own transportation to and from training. Acceptance into the program is subject to review of applicant's criminal record and police contact history. For an application visit www.herndon-va.gov or contact PFC Christopher W. Farby at 703-435-3134 or Christopher.Farbry@herndon-va.gov.

The American Legion, Wayne M. Kidwell, Post voted to donate a total of \$7,000 dollars to the following Veteran organizations: VA Veterans Care Center, DC VA Medical Center, Angel of Mercy, Marine Semper Fi Fund and Fisher House Foundations. These funds were raised during the Memorial Day

Poppy Campaign and Snow Cone sales at the Herndon Festival last year. In addition to the organizations above, a donation will also be made to the Herndon High School Naval Junior ROTC in appreciation for all the help they provide the Post throughout the year.

Partial scholarships are available for new English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Northern Virginia Community College and The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce are now enrolling qualified participants for new ESL for Employment classes that start in February. To qualify for the matching scholarship, applicants need to be from moderate-income households, complete NOVA's ESL screening test and present documentation needed to work for U.S. employers. To learn more about any of NOVA's 8 ESL for Employment class locations for the Spring 2009 semester, call 703-764-7779 or e-mail eslemployment@nvcc.edu.

The Fairfax County Police Department is seeking residents to attend the upcoming Spring Citizens Police Academy, held Thursday evenings March 12-May 16, 6:30-10 p.m. The Citizens Police Academy is a 10-week program and classes are a combination of lecture and interactive activities. Topics include SWAT and special operations, gangs, 911 communications center, patrol, crime prevention, crime

scene, identity theft and a tour of the Adult Detention Center. The program is offered free of charge. Applicants must live or work in Fairfax County, be 18 and provide their own transportation. E-mail CPA@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-280-0713 for applications.

Mothers First-Herndon/Reston is a nonprofit support organization helping women transition from careers to at-home motherhood. Meetings are on the **first and second Wednesdays** of each month at 10 a.m. at the Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon. Mothers First will go on a field trip to the Udvar Hazy Air and Space Museum Feb. 18, 4:15 p.m. RSVP to 703-467-0391.

Square dances at the Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St., Herndon, **every Saturday**. \$5 for 6 classes for seniors, \$10 for non-seniors. Call 703-464-6200.

Latin movement classes at Dance With Me Ballroom Dance Studio. No partner needed. Cuban motion, free style dancing and dance styling taught plus a fun exercise. Drop-in **every Sunday**, 2-3 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person. The studio is located at the border of Reston and Herndon at 251 Sunset Park Drive. Visit www.dancewithme.net or call 703-444-3061.

COMMUNITY

Mountain View Graduates Share Stories

“Believe in yourself and never give up.”

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Mountain View School graduations always tug at the heart. And last Tuesday's, Feb. 3, at Centreville High was no exception.

Principal Jim Oliver began the ceremony by talking about how, during the past year, seniors heard the words “change” and “yes, we can,” throughout the country, and how those words relate to them. He also noted that the 58 students in caps and gowns entered Mountain View for various reasons.

“You may have been placed here, were pregnant, didn't fit in or just plain hated school,” he said. “Many of you were told you would never succeed in school. A change was needed in your life.”

Oliver said this change didn't come easy because many of them had the perception that Mountain View was where only bad students went. “We have worked hard to change that image,” he said. “I surely don't see any bad students here tonight. What I see is the future of young adults ready to take on the next challenge in their lives. So,



Graduate Wilman Alvarez of Herndon with, front row, from left, friend Daniel Campos and parents Maria and Ramon Alvarez; and, back row, from left, friend Marvin Ayala and cousins Michael Rustrian and Boris Calderon.

to all the nonbelievers who thought you would never succeed in school, you now have the opportunity to change their attitudes and show them they were wrong.”

He spoke of the changes in priorities the

students had to make in order to be academically successful and noted how the Mountain View family was by their side the whole way. “Your teachers were patient, respectful and honestly cared about you as

individuals,” said Oliver. “Your teachers taught you that, yes, you can pass the SOLs, make honor roll, come back and graduate after having your baby, and go to college.”

“As you leave here tonight, remember the changes you made,” he continued. “Never underestimate your potential, believe in yourself and never give up. Hold your heads up high and, now, as you graduate, we can say, not ‘Yes, you can,’ but ‘Yes, you did.’”

THE FOUR STUDENT speakers then explained what the school had done for them. Nuria Mendez said she worked hard to get an education so her two, young children would have a better future. She also thanked her mother.

“I remember when we cried together in the living room when I told you I was pregnant,” said Mendez. “Thank you for showing me how to be a good mother.” She thanked her brother Andrew, as well, for helping rock her babies, and her teachers, for keeping her focused on her studies.

“I've proved to everyone I could graduate from school while raising two kids, and I hope I will be a role model to others,” she said. “I know now, with help and motivation, anything can be accomplished.”

Walter James said he used to act immature. “I thought I could breeze through

SEE GRADUATION, PAGE 15

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Herndon Boys Playing Well at Season's End

Hornets entered Concorde District tournament as No. 3 seed.

BY RICH SANDERS
THE CONNECTION

The Herndon High boys basketball team was set to begin postseason play earlier this week with a first round Concorde District tournament game against visiting Oakton.

A win in that contest, which came after press time, would advance the No. 3 seed Hornets to Thursday's semifinals against the winner of the Westfield (No. 2 seed) versus Fairfax (No. 7) game. Both the semifinals and Friday's finals are set to take place at Robinson High School.

Herndon (12-8 overall, 9-3 district) faced a must-win scenario in its earlier week play-off game against No. 6 Oakton, a team that has struggled throughout the season. The winner of that contest not only moved on to Thursday's semifinals, but also earned an automatic bid to next week's 16-team region tournament. The loser of the first-round district tournament affair, meanwhile, saw its season come to an abrupt end.

"If that's not enough to make you focus, then we're not as good a team as I thought," said Herndon coach Chris Whelan, of the must-win game against Oakton.

During the regular season, Herndon defeated Oakton in both of the two teams' meetings — 58-43 in a home game on Jan. 7, and 63-54 at Oakton on Feb. 3.

"The road win was close," said Whelan, earlier this week and prior to his team's meeting against the Cougars. "Oakton's a decent team. They are well-coached so we need to be prepared."



Herndon needed to beat Oakton earlier this week in order to qualify for next week's Northern Region tournament. Here, senior Darian Olson goes hard to the basket.

HERNDON ENTERED the postseason as a team that has been playing particularly well. The Hornets won six of their final seven games of the season, including last Friday night's 61-57 win at Westfield in the

regular season finale. Herndon senior Isaac Johnson scored 24 points and sophomore guard Austin Hamilton netted 19 in the win.

Herndon's only loss in recent weeks came against the district's regular season cham-

pion Chantilly — a tough 60-58 home loss on Feb. 6.

"I think emotionally, we're fine, we're playing really well right now," said Whelan, of his team's confidence going into the postseason. "We're playing with confidence and unselfishness. We keep getting better."

Johnson, who averaged 18 points and seven rebounds a game during the season, was recently named First Team All-Concorde District by the coaches. Hamilton (15 points per game average, four assists), meanwhile, earned Second Team honors while junior Zack Ozycz (eight points, eight rebounds) made Honorable Mention. Ozycz and junior guard Randoll Anane both were named First Team All-Defense as well.

Whelan set up a tough out-of-district schedule this season, which included a game against nationally renowned DeMatha (Hyattsville, Md.), in order to make his team tougher and more seasoned by the time tournament time rolled around. And competing in the Concorde District is a tough enough challenge in itself.

"Nine-3 in the Concorde is fantastic," said Whelan. "I think the Concorde is one of the best districts in the state."

Herndon lost to Chantilly twice. Its other district loss came in a 71-63 home setback to Westfield on Jan. 21.

HERNDON, ASSUMING it got by Oakton on Tuesday, will play a semifinals game on Thursday night at 8 p.m., most likely against Westfield. The tournament title game is scheduled for Friday night, at 8 p.m., at Robinson High. The girls district title game will take place at 6 p.m.

The Herndon girls, the No. 6 seed in the district tournament, were scheduled to play at No. 3 Robinson in a first-round game on Tuesday of this week. The Hornets (9-12, 5-7) closed the regular season with a 62-54 loss to Westfield last Friday night. Junior guard Phyllis Martin scored 19 points in the loss, while junior Carlton Chambers had 14.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

The **Herndon Ice Hockey Club** wrapped up regular season play with a 5-4, come-from-behind win over North Stafford. Herndon controlled play during the opening period, but it was not until nearly 12 minutes passed that junior Ville Rutanen scored the Hornets' first goal. Junior linemate Max Kortegast was credited with the assist. The second period saw the Hornets increase their lead after junior Sam Stone scored twice, with assists going to Rutanen, Kortegast and team captain Andrew Norman. However, North Stafford roared back with two quick goals, cutting the Herndon lead to one by the end of the second period. North Stafford then tied the game in the opening seconds of the third. Just minutes later, North Stafford took the lead on another third-period goal. It was not until the midway point in the period that the Hornets were able to regain a tie when Stone earned himself a hat trick by scoring off a pass from Kortegast. Buoyed by the shift in momentum, Rutanen, moments later,

scored his second goal of the night.

The Hornets then turned their attention to defense for the final six minutes and sophomore goalie Robert Goughnour was able to turn away the remainder of North Stafford's shots.

The win comes on the heels of last week's victory over McLean, which clinched the Hornet's first North Division title and earned them a bye in the first round of the upcoming league play-offs. The victory over Stafford earned the Hornets the second seed, overall, behind league-leading Stone Bridge. Herndon will have the home ice advantage in a Feb. 23 quarterfinal playoff game.

Two **Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading** (HOYC) squads were recognized at the Maryland Cup Beach Blast competition in Upper Marlboro, Md., on Feb. 1. More than 75 teams from the Washington, D.C.-metropolitan area competed in the event. "HOYC is a recreational league and for our girls to place when competing against teams

that practice year-round is very impressive," said Alicia Amico, commissioner of the Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading program. "I'm so proud of the hard work demonstrated by both the teams."

Coached by Amico, Adina Colander and Lori Jacobson, the junior squad walked away with fourth place. The senior squad, coached by Lindsay Hyman, Annette Kelley and Malia Phelps, placed sixth.

In individual competition, Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading members competed in the jump and tumble off events. Shannon Kelley placed first and Alexa Bradley placed third in the tumble off. Kelley and Emily Stanley participated in the jump off, where Kelley placed third.

The Herndon Optimist Youth Cheerleading program is a recreational development program for children ages 6 to 15. The cheerleaders support a Herndon Optimist Youth Football team and perform at various community events throughout the season.

Registration for the fall season and



Herndon ice hockey coach Jim Norman presents varsity letters to, from left, seniors Kyle Curran, Krister Kasulis, Andrew Norman and Chris O'Brien during ceremonies honoring the 12th-grade team members prior to the North Stafford game.

August summer camp will begin in June. For more registration or volunteer information, contact HOYC at

info@hoycheer.org or visit or visit www.herndonoptimist.org/sports/cheerleading.



In 2008, JP Vinter signs his autograph for Childhelp Fashion Show and Luncheon co-chair, Bootsie Humenansky of Great Falls.



PHOTOS BY DONNA MANZ/THE CONNECTION
Runway diva Faith Ann Finch of Reston awaits her cue with her mother, Kim.

Childhelp to Hold Benefit

Childhelp holds benefit fashion show and luncheon.

BY DONNA MANZ
THE CONNECTION

The Washington Area Chapter of Childhelp, a nonprofit dedicating its resources to the treatment and prevention of child abuse, holds its 4th Annual Fashion Show and Luncheon Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Reston Hyatt Regency. WJLA TV News anchor, Cynne Simpson, will emcee the fashion show featuring more than 26 models, from moms to teens, "tweens" and children. "Healing the Hearts of Children" is this year's theme.

"This is a party with a purpose," said event co-chair, Bootsie Humenansky of Great Falls. "We did try to make it a lot of fun. It's an opportunity for people to throw off the winter blues, to introduce spring fashions and trends," Humenansky said. "It's a good girls' day out."

For members, sponsors, friends, tennis teams and book clubs, it's a chance to socialize for a good cause, Humenansky said. The luncheon menu features butternut squash soup, spice-rubbed chicken breast on a bed of saffron-herb orzo with broccolini and thyme bordelaise and key lime pie.

Most of the models are from the McLean/Great Falls area and several of the teens and preteens are members of WINGS, a Childhelp mother/daughter service-oriented group.

"This year will be the most fun," Humenansky said. "We're trying to grow every year." Title sponsor, Booz Allen Hamilton, has been "very, very helpful" to the chapter, she said.

Last year, guests said they wished they had more time to mingle and browse the boutique vendors. For 2009, the event opens an hour earlier, at 10 a.m. Jewelry, accessories, beauty products, home fashions, children's books and hand-painted glassware are featured among the 20-plus ven-

Where & When

The Greater Washington Chapter of Childhelp Fashion Show and Luncheon is Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Reston Hyatt Regency, Reston Town Center. Tickets are \$75. Call Bootsie Humenansky at 703-444-3839 or e-mail her at bootsieh@aol.com to buy tickets or to reserve a seat. Payment in advance is by check or cash. The schedule: 10 a.m.-noon, boutique sales and silent auction; noon, lunch served and presentation of award to Kathylee Forrester; 12:30 p.m., one-hour fashion show begins; boutique sales continue until 3 p.m.

dor boutique. There is both a silent and a live auction, as well as a raffle.

Kathylee Forrester, who created therapeutic stuffed bears, will be recognized with a "Champion for Children" award at the luncheon. Forrester is an adult survivor of childhood abuse; her father was the perpetrator. Born of her personal terror, Forrester became an advocate of stronger laws to protect children. She has designed Patches the bear to help children express their emotions. Forrester donated 300 bears to the national organization and to the Childhelp Children's Center of Virginia.

"We're raising money through this luncheon to support the Childhelp programs in the Greater Washington area, including our shelter on Waples Mill Road," said publicity co-chair, Denise Balzano. Last year, the fashion show and luncheon netted the Greater Washington Chapter of Childhelp more than \$35,000 for distribution to the Fairfax shelter and the residential treatment facility outside Culpeper.

EACH DAY IN AMERICA, more than four children die as a result of child abuse in the home.

Childhelp is one of the oldest and largest national nonprofits dedicated to the treatment and prevention of child abuse and neglect. The organization provides a broad continuum of child abuse prevention and treatment programs that directly serve children and their families, including The Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-4-A-CHILD), residential treatment villages, children's advocacy centers, abuse prevention training for children and adults, as well as group homes and foster care.

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Money Matters



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

How to get by on one income while really trying? That will not only be the question but the strategy as my wife, Dina, and I, attempt to adjust to the new unemployment paradigm: she's out of work for the first time in our 30-plus years of marriage. Her long-time employer, Tivoli's Restaurant in Rosslyn (the deli and pastry shop remain open, however) closed after nearly 27 years serving the public (25 years during which Dina worked in the second floor lounge as a waitress and bartender).

To say she made friends over all those years would be an understatement of prodigious proportions. To say she networked an entire new family including the owners and their families, employees and their families, and, of course, the thousands of Tivoli customers and their families, together creating a fabric of associations and activities spanning the globe and lasting an entire generation, and then some, would be more accurate.

To characterize Dina's status as out of work is way to simple; disconnected from the only lifestyle she's really ever known and cared about her entire adult life would be more appropriate. And though the loss of Dina's income is significant (and matters more to me since I'm the business end of the relationship; she's the social director), I can certainly appreciate and understand how the loss of a lifestyle can be equally distressing. The joke among our friends has been that Dina doesn't need a new job, she needs a new lifestyle that pays.

Moving forward, the choices we have to make need to be a balance between substance and style, between money and quality of life, between fact and fiction, quite frankly. Having 25 percent fewer dollars to do it with is likely to be a challenge unlike any we, as a couple, have ever endured.

Moreover, given the middle age that we are, with the skill sets we possess, and further considering the inheritances that at present are unknown and unexpected, what we do, how we survive, what money we spend, seem unlikely to be replenished anytime soon by some financial savior riding in on a cash cow. It seems that we will have to make do riding the horse on which we rode in on.

All of which we can manage, I think. It's more that neither one of us expected to be horse-less at our present age, the age at which, accumulating for retirement becomes not only an extremely serious family business but maybe the most important, to the exclusion of all other, family business. And being left to fend more for ourselves than we had expected or anticipated was hardly the plan I had intended. Still, it's not over yet. My father made more money between age 55 and 70 than he had ever made previously, enough to fund my parent's retirement for the 15 years or so they had together before retiring for good.

If I am indeed my father's son, then I will succeed just as he did. It may not be easy but if I've inherited anything from my father (aside from his sense of humor), I've inherited his positive attitude. Dina's being out of work presents us with an opportunity. It's up to us to make the most of it.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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NEWS

Graduation at Mountain View

FROM PAGE 11

school and I had bad study habits," he said. After he and another boy "jumped another student," James was placed in Mountain View. But, he said, "Here, I found a family."

He also read lots of books, achieved a 3.0 GPA and "made the transformation from kid to adult" with help from "my inspiration and my idol, my sister Latoya — you encouraged me after I got expelled [from my former school]," said James. "Mountain View

was my final chance to graduate and helped me grow as a person."

He advised anyone thinking school is something to waste, to think again, and he recalled fun times with Mountain View's students and teachers.

"Now is the time to appreciate what we have been given and what we have achieved," he said.

"Now is the time to take responsibility."

Natalie Briseno was scared when she came to the school, a year ago. "I came from a rehab treatment facility," she said. "My inner demons kept me from what I wanted to do — graduate from high school. I hurt myself and my family."

At Mountain View, she said, "At first, I had a hard time being myself, because I didn't know who I was. But people welcomed me and didn't judge because everyone has problems."

SHE ALSO PRAISED math teacher Emilie Woolard who became her mentor. "She was the one I laughed and cried to, and she always knew the right thing to say," said Briseno. "She helped me find my talent in math and cope with life's challenges better than any rehab counselor I ever had." Then, thanking her classmates for coming into her life, Briseno told them, "You have helped me save myself."

Siobhan Russell went through "several, traumatic experiences that caused me to drop out of my base school. On my first day at Mountain View, I was terrified; I didn't know anyone or what to expect. Then I met Kate Stern who became one of my many friends here."

At her previous school, said Russell, "I didn't fit into any cliques and was labeled a loser. Here, there are no cliques, and love and caring flow easily. And the teachers are as cool as the students. Mountain View is the best thing that ever happened to me; my confidence has increased and my happiness hasn't faltered."

She said her teachers prepared her well for the future and "I am thankful I had so many people — including my mom and dad and best friend Katie — who supported me. I know that, no matter where I go in my life, the lessons I have learned here will forever guide me in the choices I make."

World History teacher Steve Tran then presented Citizenship Awards to Katherine Tripus and Briseno, saying they've "helped build a positive, community spirit through their examples and care for others." And math teacher Mike Lukacs gave Personal Achievement Awards to Jessica Galdamez, Julia Edmanson, Bolivia Vega and Russell, saying this honor recognizes those students "who've succeeded academically and personally, despite many obstacles."

Receiving Faculty Awards — requiring a minimum 3.3 GPA — were Wilman Alvarez and Marcelo Santivanez. Presenting Alvarez's award, math teacher Emilie Woolard called him a "truly amazing young man."

He's been accepted into George Mason's Dream-Catchers Program, which mentors and supports students during college. He also received a scholarship and, said Woolard, "The donor was so impressed, he offered to give Wilman monetary support for future semesters."

She said math was difficult for Alvarez but — even though he worked two jobs and became a father during the school year, he "always found the energy to show up to class, ready to learn, with no complaints. He thanked me every time I worked with him and stayed positive and focused in class."

Instead of dwelling on the hardships and challenges life dealt him, she said, he rose above them to become a better person. Said Woolard, "Wilman once told me, 'I get up each morning and thank God for what I have and am ready for whatever comes my way.'"

ESOL TEACHER Sandy Valenzuela gave Santivanez his award and described him as "one of the finest students I have had in my 15 years of teaching ESOL. "He's bright, hardworking, smart, persistent, helpful," she said. "He is an independent learner who is curious and wants to excel. But he's so much more because Marcelo gets into a person's heart."

He wanted his writing to be grammatically perfect, thoughtful and interesting, and she helped him all she could. Then one day, Santivanez returned the favor by helping her with a speech she was trying to write in Spanish. "I was in the same situation Marcelo was in every day as he struggled to learn English," said Valenzuela. He eventually rewrote nearly the whole speech — which she still uses at every graduation to alert the audience the ceremony's about to start.

That's just one of many reasons, she said, why "Marcelo will live on here at Mountain View — not only in our memories, but for the influences he has had on so many of us. For those of us who have known him, we are better for it."

"People welcomed me and didn't judge."

— Natalie Briseno, student speaker



Reston Community Center



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<h2>March</h2>	1 Washington Capitals vs. Florida Panthers (all ages • Reg. # 501111-9A)	4 USAF Band Chamber Player Series in the CenterStage (all ages • Drop-in)	12 Zumba (10-14 years • Reg. # 903003-9B) (8, 1-hour sessions) U.S. Citizenship Preparation (18 and older • Reg. # 105005-9B) (9, 2-hour sessions)		16 Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (55 and older • Reg. # 504898-9B) (16, 55-minute sessions)	
	17 Chess 1 & 2 Combo (8-12 years • Reg. # 901035-9C) (6, 90-minute sessions)		21 NYC Trip (12-18 years • Reg. # 801012-9A) Dancing to the Oldies (18 and older • Reg. # 102142-9B) (8, 1-hour sessions)		24 Beginning Spanish (14 and older • Reg. # 102357-9B) (8, 2-hour sessions) Meditation for Relaxation (18 and older • Reg. # 102115-9C) (8, 1-hour sessions)	25 Intermediate Spanish I (18 and older • Reg. # 104007-9B) (8, 2-hour sessions)
	26 Intermediate Spanish II (16 and older • Reg. # 104004-9B) (8, 2-hour sessions)		28 Tae Robics (14 and older • Reg. # 102333-9C) (8, 1-hour sessions) Chocolate Candy Making for Teens and Tweens (9-17 years • Reg. # 901039-9D)			30 Imagination and Science (5-8 years • Reg. # 903006-9C) (6, 1-hour sessions) Little Signers I (Infant-2 years • Reg. # 902347-9B) (6, 1-hour sessions) Little Signers II (1-3 years • Reg. # 902351-9C) (6, 1-hour sessions)
<h2>April</h2>	1 USAF Band Chamber Player Series in the CenterStage (all ages • Drop-in)	4 Egg-normous Egg Hunt (1-8 years Drop-in event)	7 Intergenerational Nintendo Wii Tournament (All ages • Reg. # 807598-9A) Spring Break Paintball Camp (12-18 • Reg. # 808809-9A)		18 National Acrobats of China (All ages • Reg. # 980010-9A)	

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